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Department of State

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ADS-00 HA-05 SR-04 IO-14 SC-15
SP-02 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01
ICA-11 OCT-02 CY-05 SYE-00 /132 W
----------037062 051917Z /40

P R 050850Z AUG 80
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9814
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
473.&/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 4197
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ROME

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SAN SALVADOR 5384

E.O. 12065: NAW

TAGS: PEPR, SHUM, MASS, MILI, ES
SUBJECT: STANDARD REPLY TO LETTER CAMPAIGN ON EL SALVADOR

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STANDARD LETTER EMBASSY IS SENDING TO 200-PLUS WRITERS OF ESSENTIALLY FORM LETTERS PROTESTING USG SUPPORT FOR GOES AND PROVISION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

2. " I HAVE RECEIVED YOUR LETTER REGARDING SERIOUS ABUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN EL SALVADOR. I AND MY STAFF SHARE YOUR CONCERNS AND ARE WORKING HARD TO ASSIST IN REDUCING THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN THIS STRIFE-TORN COUNTRY.

THE SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR IS TRAGIC; IT IS ALSO HIGHLY COMPLEX. DECADES OF INJUSTICE AND INEQUALITY HAVE FRAGMENTED THE COUNTRY AND DESTROYED MOST OF ITS INSTITUTIONS. THE CIVIL AND; MILITARY JUNTA IN POWER IS ATTEMPTING TO DISMANTLE EL SALVADOR'S ANTIQUATED POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEM AND TO REPLACE IT WITH ONE THAT WOULD BE MORE JUST AND DEMOCRATIC. FAR REACHING CHANGE IS UNDERWAY IN THE COUNTRY'S BASIC STRUCTURE, TYPIFIED BY THE SWEEPING LAND REFORM THAT WILL EVENTUALLY MAKE OWNERS OUT OF APPROXIMATELY ONE MILLION FAMILIES OF LANDLESS PEASANTS. NO SOCIETYCAN ATTEMPT A PROFOUND REORGANIZATION OF THE KIND THAT IS TAKING PLACE IN EL SALVADOR WITHOUT OPPOSITION. IN THIS CASE, VIOLENT OPPOSITION IS COMING FROM BOTH THE LEFT AND RIGHT. NO GOVERNMENT CAN ATTEMPT TO DEAL WITH NEARLY CONSTANT VIOLENCE AND REMAIN FREE OF ABUSES. SOME MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY SERVICES ARE GUILTY OF COLLABORATION WITH RIGHT WING TERRORIST GROUPS. THE VIOLENT LEFT HAS ALSO COMMITTED GRAVE EXCESSES.

WHILE WE DO NOT EXCUSE THE GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY TO CONTROL THE VIOLENT ACTS OF BOTH SIDES, WE DO POINT OUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GOVERNMENT FIRMLY IN POWER WHICH SYSTEMATICALLY VIOLATED HUMAN RIGHTS AS A PART OF ITS RULING PATTERN, AND A FLEDGLING GOVERNMENT COMMITTED BY ITS PROGRAM TO RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT UNABLE TO CONTROL COMPLETELY ITS OWN SECURITY FORCES.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE PRESENTS A COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT ISSUE. IN THE FIRST PLACE, WE ARE FORBIDDEN BY LAW TO GIVE ANY ASSISTANCE TO THE SECURITY FORCES. SECOND, THE ASSISTANCE THAT WE HAVE PROGRAMMED FOR THE ARMY CONSISTS PRIMARILY OF TRUCKS AND RADIOS DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN THE CHAIN OF COMMAND AND ALLOW SENIOR OFFICERS TO EXERCISE DISCIPLINE OVER SUBORDINATE UNITS IN THE FIELD. IN SOME CASES IT IS A CLOSE CALL WHETHER MILITARY ASSISTANCE CONTRIBUTES TO MAINTENANCE OF ORDER OR STRENGTHENS REPRESSIVE TENDENCIES. THE MAIN PROBLEM IN EL SALVADOR, AS WE SEE IT, IS TO RESTORE ORDER IN A FRAMEWORK THAT WILL ALLOW FOR PROGRESS TOWARD A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. WE HOPE THAT THE SMALL AMOUNT OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMED FOR EL SALVADOR WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THIS END. WE ARE MONITORING THE SITUATION CLOSELY AND WILL NOT HESITATE TO RECOMMEND A CUT-OFF IF WE SEE OUR EFFORT IS BEING MISUSED.

WE HAVE MADE THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT CLEAR. WE OPPOSE VIOLENCE FROM THE LEFT AND FROM THE RIGHT. THE RECENT ENTRY OF POLICE INTO THE SAN JOSE SCHOOL WHERE THE OFFICES OF SOCORRO JURIDICO ARE LOCATED IS A CASE IN POINT. TROOPS ENTERED THIS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION SEARCHING FOR ARMS AND PROPAGANDA. NO ARMS WERE FOUND. A GREAT DEAL OF PROPAGANDA WAS REMOVED AS WELL AS SOME OF THE FILES OF SOCORRO JURIDICO. THIS WAS A GRAVE OFFENSE ON THE PART OF THE SECURITY FORCES WHICH I HAVE PROTESTED. FORTUNATELY, THE WORK OF SOCORRO JURIDICO HAS CONTINUED.

IT IS MY HOPE, AND THAT OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, THAT THE REFORMS TAKING PLACE IN EL SALVADOR WILL SERVE TO BRING AN END TO THE VIOLENCE AND BENEFIT ALL OF THE SALVADORAN PEOPLE.

VERY TRULY YOURS, ROBERT E. WHITE, AMERICAN AMBASSADOR
WHITE

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